

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus for studying a target case by communicating information through a network, comprising:

5 first communications means for requesting from a first inspector to a second inspector to study the target case with first information attached; and

second communications means for transmitting second information not contained in said first
10 information to said second inspector for study of said target case when a study request is issued by said first communications means.

2. The information processing apparatus according
15 to claim 1, further comprising:

third communications means for requesting from said second inspector to a third inspector to study said target case; and

fourth communications means for transmitting said
20 second information to said third inspector.

3. The information processing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

fifth communications means for transmitting to
25 said second inspector third information used to allow said second inspector to access said second information when said fourth communications means transmits said

second information to said third inspector.

4. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 detection means for detecting an owner of a right to request another inspector to study said target case.

5. An information processing method for studying a target case by communicating information through a network, comprising:

first communications step of requesting from a first inspector to a second inspector to study the target case with first information attached; and

15 second communications step of transmitting second information not contained in said first information to said second inspector for study of said target case when a study request is issued by said first communications means.

20 6. A program storage medium storing a program for performing an information processing method for studying a target case by communicating information through a network, comprising:

25 a code for performing a first communications step of requesting from a first inspector to a second inspector to study the target case with first information attached; and

a code for performing a second communications step of transmitting second information not contained in said first information to said second inspector for study of said target case when a study request is
5 issued by said first communications means.

7. An information processing apparatus for fetching facsimile data received through a line into a database, comprising:

10 reception means for receiving the facsimile data;
and

retrieval means for retrieving a specified item in the database from said facsimile data.

15 8. The information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

said facsimile data contains identification information about a specified item stored in said database.

20

9. The information processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said facsimile data further contains due date information about a specified item stored in said database.

25

10. The information processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said facsimile data

further contains attached document information about a specified item stored in said database.

11. The information processing apparatus
5 according to claim 10, wherein said attached document information refers to a name of a document received from Patent Office and/or a name of a cited document.

12. The information processing apparatus
10 according to claim 7, further comprising management means for receiving said facsimile data, and automatically generating a work flow in a network according to information contained in the facsimile data.

13. The information processing apparatus
15 according to claim 12, wherein said work flow contains due date management and mail transmission.

14. An information processing method for fetching
20 facsimile data received through a line into a database, comprising the steps of:

receiving facsimile data; and
retrieving a specified item in a database from
25 said facsimile data.

15. A program storage medium storing a program

for realizing an information processing method for
fetching facsimile data received through a line into a
database, comprising:

5 a code for realizing a receiving step of receiving
facsimile data; and

a code for realizing a retrieving step of
retrieving a specified item in a database from said
facsimile data.

10 16. An information processing apparatus for
processing document data by communicating information,
comprising:

15 first storage means for storing a
transmission/reception record of a document transmitted
to or received from Patent Office;

second storage means for storing document data of
said document;

20 acquisition means for acquiring an application
number from the transmission/reception record stored in
said first storage means or the document data stored in
said second storage means;

a table storing data showing correspondence
between an application number and an applicant; and

25 extraction means for extracting document data of a
document stored in said second storage means and
related to said application number by referring to said
table using the application number obtained by said

acquisition means as a key.

17. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 16, further comprising holding means
5 for holding the document data extracted by said
extraction means in a holder for each applicant.

18. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 17, further comprising transmission
10 means for transmitting the document data held in said
holder to a corresponding applicant.

19. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 17, further comprising printing
15 means for printing the document data held by said
holder by applicant.

20. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 16, wherein said data stored in said
20 table indicates an applicant of an application
corresponding to said application number.

21. An information processing method for
processing document data by communicating information,
25 comprising the steps of:

storing a transmission/reception record of a
document transmitted to or received from Patent Office

in first storage means;

storing the document data of said document in
second storage means;

acquiring an application number from the
5 transmission/reception record stored in said first
storage means or the document data stored in said
second storage means; and

extracting document data of a document stored in
said second storage means and related to said
10 application number by referring to a table storing data
showing correspondence between an application number
and an applicant name using the application number as a
key.

15 22. A program storage medium storing a program
for realizing an information processing method for
processing document data by communicating information,
comprising the steps of:

a code for realizing a storing step of storing a
20 transmission/reception record of a document transmitted
to or received from Patent Office in first storage
means;

a code for realizing a storing step of storing the
document data of said document in second storage means;

25 a code for realizing an acquiring step of
acquiring an application number from the
transmission/reception record stored in said first

storage means or the document data stored in said
second storage means; and

5 a code for realizing an extracting step of
extracting document data of a document stored in said
second storage means and related to said application
number by referring to a table storing data showing
correspondence between an application number and an
applicant name using said application number as a key.

10 23. An information processing apparatus for
managing a document related to technical information,
comprising:

determination means for determining a rule of a
law relating to overseas transmission of said technical
15 information; and

control means for controlling overseas
transmission of said document depending on a
determination result by said determination means.

20 24. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 23, wherein said document relates to
a document about a patent application, and is
transmitted as electronic data.

25 25. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 24, wherein said determination means
determines the rule based on a filing date of said

patent application.

26. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 24, wherein said determination means
5 determines the rule based on a flag stored in a server
for managing said document.

27. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 26, wherein said flag indicates
10 whether or not a license has been acquired.

28. The information processing apparatus
according to claim 23, wherein said control means
transmits said document overseas through a network.
15

29. An information processing method for managing
a document related to technical information, comprising
the steps of:

determining a rule of a law relating to overseas
20 transmission of said technical information; and
controlling overseas transmission of said document
depending on a determination result obtained in said
determining step.

25 30. A program storage medium storing a program
for realizing an information processing method for
managing a document related to technical information,

comprising the steps of:

a code for realizing a determining step of determining a rule of a law relating to overseas transmission of the technical information; and

- 5 a code for performing a controlling step of controlling overseas transmission of said document depending on a determination result obtained in said determining step.